

# Dictators and Their Demise

Professor Xu

Spring, 2022

E-mail: [xx2728@princeton.edu](mailto:xx2728@princeton.edu)

Web: <https://xu-xu.net>

Office Hours: M 1:30p-2:30p (via Canvas Calendar)

Class Hours: M W 11:00a-11:50a

Office: 403 Robertson Hall

Class Room: Louis A. S A71

Precepts: W 1:30p-2:20p, W 3:30p-4:20p, Th 1:30p-2:20p, Th 2:30p-3:20p

## Teaching Assistants:

Gregory Amusu

Office Hours: To be announced

Office: To be announced

Yutian An

Office Hours: Th 2:30p-3:30p

Office: To be announced

---

## Course Description

This course provides a broad exploration about how non-democratic governments throughout the world rule. We examine: the conditions that give rise to authoritarianism; the variety of authoritarian regimes; the strategies authoritarian leaders use to stay in power; the consequences of different types of authoritarianism for outcomes such as economic growth and human development; and the domestic and international sources of authoritarian demise. The course covers cases of authoritarian rule in: Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and China. The course builds knowledge about the governments under which most people in the Global South lived during the 20th century. Even today, roughly half of the world's population lives under some form of non-democratic government. Yet almost all courses currently in the curriculum, particularly in the field of comparative politics, focus exclusively on democratic forms of government. This course therefore examines a new topic not currently offered in the curriculum.

In addition to learning about different types of authoritarian rule, students form an understanding of how common foreign policy tools, such as economic sanctions, foreign aid, and human rights shaming, are likely to affect domestic politics in these countries. This knowledge helps students critically evaluate foreign policy relationships between democracies, such as the United States, and dictatorships. Course materials cover theoretical approaches to the study of authoritarian rule, in-depth case studies (including novels, biographies, and documentary), and empirical research.

This course requires weekly reading assignments, three written assignments, an in-class presentation, a midterm exam, and a final exam. Students develop analytic skills through written homework assignments in which they apply the broad theoretical concepts to analyze counterfactual situations from specific cases of authoritarian rule. Finally, the written assignments require students to develop skills working with real data. Students collect and graphically present basic descriptive data about economic and human development in

non-democratic countries: economic data, infant mortality, literacy, and indicators of women's well-being. Using real world data to make international comparisons helps students develop skills to form and articulate complex arguments, and teaches them the basics of research design.

## Course Materials

Book chapters and articles are on CANVAS. A few readings have direct urls embedded in the syllabus.<sup>1</sup> I recommend you buy two books prior to March 07 (not on CANVAS):

- Mario Vargas Llosa (2000) *The Feast of the Goat* (Picador USA)
- Michela Wrong (2000) *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz* (Perennial)

## Course Requirement

Students are expected to: (a) attend all lectures; (b) read assigned materials before the start of each class; (c) complete three assignments; (e) give a 10-15mins presentation in one of the precepts (d) take a midterm exam; (f) take a final exam.

## Course Structure and Grading

Final grades will be based on class/precept participation (15% of final grade, including 5% for an in-class presentation), three 2-page assignments (10% of final grade each), one midterm exam (25% of final grade), and one final exam (30% of final grade).

**Lecture and Discussion:** Classes will be devoted to lecture and discussion. The purpose of discussion is to provide students an opportunity to clarify questions they have related to the readings and lectures, and to probe more deeply topics of particular interest. Lectures notes will be posted on CANVAS one day before each class.

**Assignments:** Details of the assignments will be posted on CANVAS.

**Presentation:** Details of the assignment will be posted on CANVAS.

**Exams:** The midterm exam will take place in-class and will consist of short answer questions and one essay. The final exam will be conducted during final exam week at the assigned time and location.

I will use the following scale to calculate your course grade:

---

<sup>1</sup>Half a dozen or so readings are from the *Monkey Cage*, a feature of the *Washington Post*. This blog provides short articles by political scientists that are intended for a general audience. The articles are based on evidence from peer-reviewed articles published in political science journals. In the words of one of its founders, the *Monkey Cage* is intended as a place where "political scientists draw on their own expertise and the discipline's research to illuminate the news, inform civic discussion, and make some sense of the circus that is politics." The editors of the *Monkey Cage* are political scientists, not editorial staff or journalists employed by the *Washington Post*.

A	93-100	C+	77-79.99
A-	90-92.99	C	73-76.99
B+	87-89.99	C-	70-72.99
B	83-86.99	D	60-66.99
B-	80-82.99	F	59.99 and below

## Course Policies

### During Class

I understand that the electronic recording of notes will be important for class and so computers will be allowed in class. Please refrain from using computers for anything but activities related to the class. Phones are prohibited as they are rarely useful for anything in the course. According to the University's COVID policies, eating is not allowed in classroom. Lifting the mask to take sips of a beverage is permitted.

### Attendance Policy

I will not take attendance, but participation in the seminar counts for **15%** of the final grade. If you do miss class, you are expected to get notes from a fellow student – ‘private make-up lectures’ with the instructor will not take place.

### Policies on Grading, Incomplete Grades and Late Assignments

If an extended deadline is not authorized by the instructor or the school, an unfinished incomplete grade will automatically change to an F. The burden of fulfilling an incomplete grade is the responsibility of the student. The university policy on incomplete grades is located at this [Link](#).

**Three Assignments** will be due at **12:00pm the Sunday before class**. **Late papers will be downgraded by one-third of a letter grade per day**, including weekends. For example, a “B” assignment due Sunday but submitted on Tuesday will receive a “C+”. Papers submitted more than four days after the due date will not be accepted and will receive an F.

## Academic Integrity

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. This [page](#) provides information about Princeton's academic regulations and how you can safeguard the integrity of your original work.

## COVID Policies

Requirements for testing, masking etc. are set at the university, not departmental, level and are subject to change over time. Currently, faculty, staff and students must be fully vaccinated, wear a mask indoors, and participate in weekly asymptomatic testing. To check the latest policies, please visit <https://covid.princeton.edu/>.

## Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. We may adjust the schedule due to time or interest.

### Week 1, 01/24 - 01/28 : Topic 1. What are dictatorships?

(M) No readings; first day of class.

(W) Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. CQ Press. "Three Measures of Democracy." 154-169.

### Week 2, 01/31 - 02/04 : Topic 2. How are dictatorship different from democracies?

(M) Zakaria, Fareed. 1997. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." *Foreign Affairs*. 76: 22-43.

(M) Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Ahmad Way. 2002. "Elections Without Democracy: the Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2: 51-65.

(W) Slater, Dan and Lucan Ahmad Way. 2017. *Washington Post*. "Was the 2016 U.S. Election Democratic? Here Are 7 Serious Shortfalls." January 12.

(W) Berman, Sheri. 2018. *Washington Post*. "Populists Have One Big Thing Right: Democracies Are Becoming Less Open." January 8.

### Week 3, 02/07 - 02/11 : Topic 3. How do dictatorships come to power?

(M) Geddes, Barbara, Joseph George Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse*. Cambridge University Press. "Chapter 2: Autocratic Seizures of Power.": 25-43

(M) Geddes, Barbara, Joseph George Wright, Erica Frantz, and George Derpanopoulos. 2016. "Are Coups Good for Democracy?" *Washington Post*.

(W) Kendall-Taylor, Andrea. 2017. "The Global Rise of Personalized Politics." *Washington Quarterly*. (7-17)

### Week 4, 02/14 - 02/18 : Topic 4. Are all dictators the same? How do they differ?

(M) Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. CQ Press. "Credible Commitment Problems.": 191-193.

(M) Haber, Stephen. 2006. "Authoritarian government." *The Oxford handbook of political economy*: 693-707.

(W) Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What do we know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science*. 2: 115-144.

**Week 5, 02/21 - 02/25 : Topic 5: How do dictators rule? How do they stay in power?**

(M) Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. "Selectorate Theory." 382-399

(W) Geddes, Barbara, Joseph George Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse*. Cambridge University Press. "Chapter 4: Power Concentration." 61-94

**Week 6, 02/28 - 03/04 : Topic 6: Why do dictators have democratic-looking institutions? & Midterm Exam**

(M) Morgenbesser, Lee. 2016. *Behind the Façade: Elections Under Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia*. SUNY Press, pp. 1-33

(M) Knutsen, Carl Henrik, Håvard Mokleiv Nygård, and Tore Wig. 2017. "You'd Think Dictators Would Avoid Elections." *Washington Post*.

(W) Midterm Exam

**Spring Recess, 03/07 - 03/11 : No Class**

**Week 7, 03/14 - 03/18 : Topic 7: Are dictatorships good for economic growth and human development?**

(M) Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, democracy, and development." *American political science review* 87, no. 3: 567-576.

(M) Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. pp. 160-188. "Famine and Other Crisis."

(W) Demick, Barbara. Letter from Yanji, "Nothing Left." *The New Yorker*, July 12, 2010, 44-49

(W) Subramanian, Arvind. 2011. "The Inevitable Superpower: Why China's Dominance Is a Sure Thing." *Foreign Affairs*. 90: 66-78

**Week 8, 03/21 - 03/25 : Topic 8: Dominant party rule in Mexico**

(M) Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico*. Vol. 296. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 28-42, 44-55, 63-76

(W) Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico*. Vol. 296. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 82-108, 117-131

**Week 9, 03/28 - 04/01 : Topic 9: Communist party rule in China**

- (M) [The Economist](#). 2008. "China's Reform: The Second Long March." December 13.
- (M) McGregor, Richard. 2010. *The Party: the secret world of China's communist rulers*. Penguin UK. "Chapter 2: China Inc." 34-69.
- (W) Wallace, Jeremy. 2014. *Cities and Stability: Urbanization, Redistribution, and Regime Survival in China*. Oxford University Press. "Chapter 6: Return to Sender." pp.159-185
- (W) [Johnson, Ian](#). 2012. "Dynasty of Different Order Is Reshaping China." *The New York Times*. November 13.
- (W) [Frantz, Erica and Andrea Kendall-Taylor](#). "The Move to One-Man Rule in China and Beyond." *The Interpreter*

**Week 10, 04/04 - 04/08 : Topic 10: Military rule in Chile**

- (M) Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. 1993. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. WW Norton & Company, 1993. pp. 15-90
- (W) Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. 1993. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. WW Norton & Company. pp. 90-114, 176-183, 186-198.

**Week 11, 04/11 - 04/15 : Topic 11: Personalist power, Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic**

- (M) Llosa, Mario Vargas. 2001. *The Feast of the Goat*. Macmillan. Chapters 1-2, 5-9
- (W) Llosa, Mario Vargas. 2001. *The Feast of the Goat*. Macmillan. Chapters 12-14, 18-22

**Week 12, 04/18 - 04/22 : Topic 12: Protests in dictatorships**

- (M) Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now Out of Never: the Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44.01: 7-25.
- (M) Barany, Zoltan. 2011. "Comparing the Arab Revolts: the Role of the Military." *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4: 24-35.
- (W) [Chenoweth, Erica](#). 2011. *Foreign Policy*. "Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance." August 24.

**Week 13, 04/25 - 04/29 : Reading Periods**

**Week 14, 05/02 - 05/06 : Reading Periods & Final Exam**

**Week 15, 05/09 - 05/13 : Final Exam**

## Further Reading

*The Accusation: Forbidden Stories from Inside North Korea*, Bandi (North Korea)

*The Art of Political Murder*, Francisco Goldman (Guatemala)

*The Autumn of the Patriarch*, Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia)

*Blindness*, José Saramago (Portugal)

*The Collapse*, Mary Elise Sarotte (East Germany)

*The Comedians*, Graham Greene (Haiti)

*Dinner with Mugabe*, Heidi Holland (Zimbabwe)

*Dogeaters*, Jessica Hagedorn (Philippines)

*The Emperor*, Ryszard Kapuscinski (Ethiopia)

*Exit the Colonel*, Ethan Chorin (Libya)

*The Fear*, Peter Godwin (Zimbabwe)

*The Gun Dealer's Daughter*, Gina Apostol (Philippines)

*The Hunger Angel*, Herta Müller (Romania)

*"I Didn't Do It For You"*, Michela Wrong (Eritrea)

*In the Time of Butterflies*, Julia Alvarez (Dominican Republic)

*It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower*, Michela Wrong (Kenya)

*Journey Into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Semyonavna Ginzburg (Soviet Union)

*A Man of the People*, Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)

*The Man without a Face*, Masha Gessen (Putin, Russia)

*The Mantle of the Prophet*, Roy Mottahedeh (Iran)

*The President (El Señor Presidente)*, Miguel Ángel Asturias (Guatemala)

*Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Azar Nafisi (Iran)

*Sardines*, Nuruddin Farah (Somalia)

*Shah of Shahs*, Ryszard Kapuscinski (Iran)